**RESIGNATION LETTER FOR TEACHER TO PRINCIPAL**

Subject: To My Dear Camerados,

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I am writing to inform you of my resignation from Denver Public Schools. My time spent in DPS as a student, paraprofessional, teacher, assistant principal and school leader have been most of my life and some of the best times of my life. You could say I learned how to grow up in DPS. The most amazing leaders I have ever encountered and spoken with have been in this incredible city and school system. I’ve traveled to new heights I never believed I could go to! My life was saved by students that served as DPS pupils and by an Assistant Principal who refused to let me dwindle away after my sweet mother and caring grandparents passed on to another place.

Leaders like Allen Smith, Antwan Wilson, Randy Johnson, Tom Boasberg, Greta Martinez, Bill Kohut, Tony Smith, Susana C., Alyssa, and Debbie H. gave me an opportunity and some even showed me what a father could have looked like in my life; or what a mother’s care could still feel like. I have so looked up to our leadership. Working with Yolanda Greer, Barb Nash, Araceli, Prudence, Derek Hawkins, Juli Yacovetta, Chris Deremer, John Goe, Rodney Jackson Jen Jackson, Dave Daves, Legina Layman, Will Anderson, Kendrick Friendly, Tonyetta Fields, Kelli Lesh, Kristen Moreland, Sonja Debose, Sharon Dacotah, Shirene Patterson, Lesley Meyer, Becca Burkhart. The list just goes on. I am so proud and fulfilled by everything we accomplished for kids far and wide.

The parents, the community, our beautiful times together are a blinding light of smiles, joy, amazing accomplishments and love. Dancing at DPS Values Day, winning the heart of so many Southeast parents and students, the student protest during my last day of teaching at South- one kid stood up on a chair and saluted with tears in his eyes, Walt Whitman’s “Oh captain, My captain!” When I walked in my AVID class, they were all standing on tables, 50 students saluting, “Oh Captain, My Captain!” I thought I was in a movie! No day has been the same since and many of them have felt like movies.

In the far northeast we turned a Red school Green and started a mentoring for the most-at-risk program that is now all over the state of Colorado. There are so many great kids out there and at MLK! I still cheer for the students, teachers and parents at Hamilton Middle School! The kind of Teachers I led there are harder and harder to find these days. One who really didn’t care for me in the beginning sent her student with me back home to Manual!

I knew going to lead at Manual could break me because everyone warned me. It broke the heart of so many when I grew up down the street in my childhood. One of my best friends was murdered after I dropped him off right across the street from Manual, as I started my high school career. He had a beautiful smile, Shandell Banks, I met him at Morey Middle School with the golden mustang in the cafeteria. What I am most proud of in my time leading in DPS is where I chose to lead. DPS giving me the chance to go home and make some things right by the students there is a gift I will always be thankful for.

The decision to go there represents the kind of man I want to be and the kind of people that we so desperately need to help our common humanity. Manual is where the light is, and that light has been me. It’s the light that I looked for when I was lost, it’s the light that came from reading so many books and learning from so many people and experiences. In many ways, my mother’s early death became the event that brought so much joy, pride, healing and hope to Manual kids and families years later. She is still giving back to our community through me, which has made almost every day for me so special, so healing, so hopeful! Before I came to Manual, I was told by a leader you are going to ruin your career, you are jumping from the frying pan into the fire, the school and kids down there are dying on the vine, there is a reason no one wants to lead there, it is highly likely you will fail.

After sleeping on it, I returned the next day with the statement, “I don’t think going back to my community and telling 300 kids we love them and haven’t forgot about them is a failure. And if that is failure and I ruin my career, I guess I will have to get another career. They deserve it.”

Thank you, my dear leaders and camerados! I love you all and still believe love conquers! Every child can succeed!

Nickolas Haney Benjamin Dawkins

Thank you,

Nickolas Dawkins |Principal

Manual High School

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